

The PUMPKIN SPICE CAFÉ

IT'S THE SEASON TO FALL IN LOVE...

LAURIE GILMORE

THE PUMPKIN SPICE CAFÉ

Dream Harbor Series

Book 1

LAURIE GILMORE



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To the beardiest, most-flannel-wearing guy I know. Thanks for always providing so much inspiration.

Playlist



- We fell in love in october** - girl in red
- Dancing With Your Ghost** - Sasha Sloan
- invisible string** - Taylor Swift
- Autumn Leaves** - Ed Sheeran
- Amoeba** - Clairo
- Falling** - Harry Styles
- Remember That Night?** - Sara Kays
- Hands To Myself** - Selena Gomez
- Another Love** - Tom Odell
- ceilings** - Lizzy McAlpine
- Wildest Dreams** - Taylor Swift
- Before You Go** - Lewis Capaldi
- Haunted House** - Holly Humberstone
- cardigan** - Taylor Swift
- Video Games** - Lana Del Rey
- Flicker** - Niall Horan
- 34+35** - Ariana Grande
- The Night We Met** - Lord Huron
- Dandelions** - Ruth B.
- Kiss Me** - Sixpence None The Richer
- Everything Has Changed** - Taylor Swift
- Dreams** - The Cranberries
- Maroon** - Taylor Swift



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Chapter One

Jeanie Ellis had never killed a man before, but tonight might be the night. Desperate times and all. She clutched the baseball bat tighter in her fist and crept down the rickety, back staircase.

She hadn't slept in three nights. Not since moving into the apartment above her aunt's café. Well, *her* café, technically. Jeanie was officially the new owner of The Pumpkin Spice Café, her Aunt Dot's pride and joy until exactly two weeks ago, when the older woman announced she was retiring – and taking off for the Caribbean for a few weeks to work on her tan. Apparently, Dot could think of no one better to take over her beloved café than her favorite – and *only*, as Jeanie pointed out – niece. An idea that now seemed completely absurd as Jeanie tiptoed off the last step prepared for battle.

Every night, she'd heard strange noises. Scritch-scratch type noises with the occasional clangy-bangy type noise. At first, she'd tried to chalk it up to the wind, or maybe an animal scurrying through the back alley. She absolutely refused to let her mind take off down a path to the worst-case scenario, like she usually did. She would *not* allow herself to imagine an escaped serial killer creeping up her back steps. That banging was definitely *not* an armed robber, here to take the meager change her aunt kept in the cash register.

Jeanie was starting fresh.

Jeanie was a new woman.

The quaint seaside town of Dream Harbor and its inhabitants knew nothing about her, and she planned to take full advantage of that.

A shuffling noise at the back door caught her attention. She would take full advantage of her 'New Life, New Jeanie' plan as soon as she figured out what was keeping her up at night. No one could live a laid-back, quaint, small-town life with a murderer outside their back door. That was just logical.

She choked up on the bat and crossed the small hallway between the stairs and the door that led to the alley behind the café. Although 'alley' wasn't quite the right word for it. Alley conjured images of overflowing trash cans and scurrying rats. But Jeanie wasn't in Boston anymore. She was in Dream Harbor, which she was convinced someone must have actually

dreamed up. It was far too idyllic to have sprung up naturally. No, the space behind the café and the other businesses on Main Street was more like its own little side street, with room for delivery trucks and tidy trash bins. She'd even seen some of the other shop owners taking breaks and chit-chatting back there during the day. Not that she'd talked to anyone yet. She wasn't quite ready for that, for being the new kid.

Jeanie shook her head. Her thoughts were way off track, and she was about to be potentially murdered. Alley or not, whatever was out there was keeping her awake, and after three nights without sleep, she was barely holding it together. She rested the bat on her shoulder and reached for the doorknob. It was nearly dawn and a weak gray light seeped through the window over the door.

Oh, good, Jeanie thought vaguely. At least I'll be able to see my attacker before I die. With that less-than-pleasant thought in her head – not at all the positive new persona she was shooting for – she yanked open the door—

And came face to face with a crate of small pumpkins. Gourds? It didn't matter, because before Jeanie could get her produce names sorted, the giant man holding the crate of small pumpkins spoke.

Or at least he made a gruff startled noise that reminded Jeanie that she was currently holding a baseball bat in a very aggressive manner. She nearly dropped it to her side, but then she remembered; this was still a large, strange man. Gourds or no gourds, she probably shouldn't let her guard down just yet.

'Who are you?' she asked, keeping one hand on the door in case she had to slam it in this mysterious pumpkin-man's face.

His dark eyebrows rose a fraction of an inch as though he was surprised by her question. 'Logan Anders,' he said as though that would clear things up for her. It didn't.

'And what are you doing in my back alley, Logan Anders?' she asked.

He blew out a frustrated-sounding breath and shifted the crate in his arms. It was probably heavy, but Jeanie would not compromise her safety just because this man was the picture of autumnal bounty with his crate of vegetables and his worn, flannel shirt and thick beard. Her gaze lingered on his face for a beat longer. So she could pick him out of a line-up, she reasoned. She might need to know that above his beard was a long, straight nose and ruddy cheeks. The police officer might ask her if he had lashes for days, and the answer would be yes. It might be of the utmost importance to the investigation to know that even in the dim light of the morning she could see that his eyes were a devastating blue.

'It's Thursday.'

Jeanie blinked. Did the day of the week have something to do with why this man was here keeping her awake?

'And you've been keeping me up since Monday,' she said.

Now it was Logan's turn to look confused. 'I just got here.' He shifted the crate again, his

forearms flexing under the strain. It really must be heavy, but he hadn't made any move to come in or set it down.

'Well, I've been hearing strange noises all week and I tried to pretend it was just the wind or a raccoon or something. But then I started thinking that's probably what people tell themselves right before the killer bursts through the door.'

Logan choked a little, his eyes going wide. 'Killer?'

Jeanie felt her cheeks heat up. Maybe she'd let her imagination get the best of her. 'Or something...' Her voice trailed off. She wasn't really sure what to say to this strange man and he seemed to be equally at a loss. 'So, what are you doing here?' she prompted.

'Right, uh, I deliver produce every Thursday.' He nodded toward the box of said produce.

Jeanie winced. The produce delivery. Of course. Aunt Dot had told her so many things in the day before she left and Jeanie had written none of it down. The café had been closed since she'd got here and she still hadn't wrapped her head around everything that needed to be done. Thankfully, Norman, the café's long-time manager, was here to help. He assured her they'd have the café up and running by the weekend.

Logan shifted the box again. The heavy box he was still holding.

'So sorry!' Jeanie stepped back and swept her arm toward the café. 'Come in. We'll find a place to put those ... uh ... pumpkins?'

Logan hesitated in the doorway, his gaze shifting between Jeanie and the bat still poised over her shoulder.

'Gah! Sorry. I won't hit you on the head. I promise.' She tried to give him a reassuring smile but it didn't seem to help. He still hovered in the doorway.

'I'm really sorry, I assumed you were a murderer. It's nothing personal. I just haven't slept in three nights, and something's been making noise down here, I swear. And I'm still trying to wrap my head around this whole café-inheritance thing.'

Logan stared at her, a hesitance still in his eyes. Crap. She'd probably already scared him. Jeanie had been called 'intense' on more than one occasion throughout her life. She was pretty sure it was even on a report card or two. It was something she was trying to work on, part of her new, Jeanie persona. Less talking. Less overthinking. Less intensity.

She took a deep breath and blew it out slowly. Café Jeanie was calm, chill. Just your friendly neighborhood coffee-shop owner, ready with a smile and your favorite drink. Not her theories on who or what was trying to kill her on any given day, or the latest in ice-cap-melting news, or the eighteen things she had to get done later today.

She tried to channel Aunt Dot's free-spirit vibes even as she wished the woman had been slightly less laid-back and had actually left her more explicit directions. She attempted a gentler, sweeter smile. It felt strange on her face. 'Please, come in. That must be so heavy.'

Logan gave a slight nod in acknowledgment. 'I usually leave it out here.'

'Oh.' So it wasn't her monologue scaring him away, she'd just interrupted his usual

operating procedure. She understood very well how that could throw a person off. When her favorite coffee place on the corner was closed for a week, she could barely function. And it wasn't for lack of caffeine. There was no shortage of coffee shops in the city, but none of them were hers. She'd been in a bad mood all week.

Her smile this time was genuine. 'Well, you're here now and I'm awake. How about a cup of coffee?'

Chapter Two

Logan liked the new owner of the PS Café more when she wasn't about to knock his head off with a baseball bat. But that wasn't saying a whole lot. He had work to do, deliveries to make, and well-meaning townsfolk to avoid. He really didn't have time to be sitting here having a predawn drink with her, but he didn't seem to be able to escape. Or get a word in. Dot's niece hadn't stopped talking since she insisted he come in.

Every Thursday for the past five years, ever since he started managing the farm, he'd left Dot's four crates of produce next to the back door. He liked being in town before the sun came up and the people came out. He liked getting his business done before any other businesses were open.

Logan wasn't one for small talk. He hated speculating about the weather. He did not need to know about the latest town scandal. He liked being a part of the latest town scandal even less. So the quicker he was done with his deliveries, the sooner he could get back to the quiet of the farm. Or as quiet as a farm can be with half a dozen chickens, two senior goats, one rescue alpaca, and a grandmother who loved chatter. Thankfully, his grandfather was just as quiet as he was. His grandmother talked enough for the both of them. Almost as much as this Jeanie did.

'So, what do you think my aunt intended to do with those ... uh, little pumpkins?' she asked, glancing down at the crate he'd left by his feet. She stood behind the counter, a hand on her hip, the other swiping at the little wisps of hair that had fallen out of her messy bun.

'Gourds,' Logan corrected her from his spot on the other side of the counter.

'Right. Gourds. I thought so.' Jeanie still looked confused. 'But ... you don't eat them, right?'

He nearly laughed. Nearly. He was still too annoyed to laugh. 'No, you don't eat gourds.'

Jeanie's gaze roamed over the other three crates that he'd carried in instead of leaving them in their rightful place near the door. The place he always left them. The place he wished he'd left them this morning. 'I'm guessing the rest of it is for the smoothies she added to the menu.'

Logan nodded. This town loved their smoothies. Not that he was going to complain. Smoothies meant the café needed a lot of fresh fruit and veggies from his farm. Smoothies were good for business.

‘The gourds are just decorative,’ he said, saving both of them from more guesses.

Jeanie’s eyes lit up like he’d solved the world’s problems. He ignored how pride flared in his chest at the sight of her pleased face. It had been a while since he’d been able to solve anyone’s problems.

‘Of course! I really should have thought of that. It’s the lack of sleep!’

She rested her elbows on the counter and her chin in her hands. She was wearing an old, oversized cardigan, the sleeves so long they covered her hands, over a threadbare T-shirt and pajama pants. He was pretty sure the pants had little hedgehogs all over them, but he’d tried very hard not to notice.

He was trying very hard not to notice a lot of things about Jeanie. Like how expressive her dark eyebrows were, and how she hadn’t stopped moving – making his coffee with quick efficient movements. She was a study in contradiction. Competent, but lost at the same time. Quick to smile, but also quick to frown, every emotion clear in her eyes. Dark brown eyes, nearly black, the same as his coffee order.

Jeanie rubbed a hand down her face, breaking the spell. How long had he been staring at her? She yawned and stretched her hands above her head. Her T-shirt lifted with her arms and Logan averted his gaze from the exposed slice of skin above her waistband. He was definitely not going to notice that.

When he dared to look at her again, she was back to leaning on her elbows on the counter. Dark circles hung beneath her eyes, her black hair a messy nest on the top of her head. Her slumped, defeated posture tugged at something inside him. Something inconvenient. Something he did not have time for right now.

He opened his mouth to tell her he had to get going on his deliveries, but she was already talking again.

‘It’s just so weird. I keep hearing these sounds. Every night. Do you think maybe this place is haunted?’

Logan nearly choked on his coffee. ‘Haunted?’

‘Yeah.’ She straightened, her eyes brightening with her new theory. ‘Haunted. Like maybe the spirits who live here aren’t happy with the new owner.’

‘The spirits?’ It was too early in the morning for this level of insanity.

‘Ghost, spirits, whatever.’ Jeanie waved her hand like the semantics of the haunting didn’t matter. ‘Something is upset that I’m here.’

‘I really don’t think—’

‘There’s no other logical explanation.’ She crossed her arms over her chest. Case closed. ‘This place is definitely haunted.’

‘No other explanation?’ Logan thumped his mug on the counter. This was too much. ‘Raccoons, old pipes, drafty windows, your own imagination.’ He counted the other explanations off on his fingers. Jeanie narrowed her eyes at him on that last one, but he went on. ‘Could be the

kids in town messing around. There are an infinite number of explanations that make more sense than ghosts. Now I really need to go—’

‘What do you mean kids messing around?’

Logan sighed and resisted tearing the hair from his head. ‘I don’t know. Maybe some kids were messing around in the back alley.’

Jeanie nodded slowly, taking in this new theory.

Logan slid his mug across the counter, a thank you and goodbye on the tip of his tongue.

But Jeanie was faster. ‘So what are we going to do about it? I really need sleep.’

‘We?’ He backed away from the counter. Maybe he could just turn and run. The last thing he needed was to get further entangled with the new café owner. He could practically hear the book club ladies cackling about it. They ate gossip for breakfast.

Jeanie nodded. ‘You’re my only friend in town. I can’t confront a gang of teenagers by myself.’

‘*Gang* is being a bit generous,’ he mumbled, still backing toward the door, but now Jeanie was following him. Definitely hedgehogs on the jammies. He refused to find that endearing.

‘Please? I’m new here and I feel like I have no idea what I’m doing...’ She shook her head, her words trailing off. ‘Sorry. This isn’t your problem.’ She smiled. ‘I’ll figure it out.’

The smile she forced onto her face tugged at something inside him again. She looked so ... so lost. Even as she smiled and pushed the hair from her face, attempting to assure him she was fine. She clearly wasn’t. And that scrambled him up even more than her constant talking.

Damn it. ‘Come to the town meeting tonight,’ he said.

‘Town meeting?’

‘Yeah.’ He ran a hand down his beard already regretting his next words. ‘They’re every other Thursday. You can bring up your ... uh ... problem. Get some help.’

Her smile grew into something bright and real. *Oh, no.* Jeanie’s real smile was even more endearing than the damn hedgehogs. How had his usual morning deliveries taken such a drastic turn?

‘Thank you! That’s a great idea.’ Jeanie clasped her hands in front of her, like she was stopping herself from reaching out for a hug. Logan didn’t know if he was relieved or disappointed by that.

He needed to go. He had one hand on the doorknob, nearly there. Nearly back to his normal morning, his blessed quiet.

‘Will you be there?’ Jeanie’s question stopped him before he could escape. Logan usually only went to town meetings if forced to by some farm issue and only then if his grandmother was too busy with her knitting circle to come into town. His grandfather would rather have teeth pulled, without anesthesia, than attend a town meeting (his words).

Logan had no need to show up this week and yet for some reason found himself saying, ‘Yeah, I’ll be there.’

Jeanie's delighted squeak followed him out into the predawn light.
The book club was going to have a field day.

Chapter Three

Hello, I'm Jeanie Ellis, Dorothy's niece, and the new owner of The Pumpkin Spice Café. I've been having a little issue with a nocturnal disturbance...

Nocturnal disturbance? That made her sound even crazier than she had this morning. Jeanie's knee bounced up and down despite her attempts to stop. She was nervous. She wanted to make a good first impression at this meeting, and she'd gone over her little speech in her head at least a dozen times since she got here. Twenty minutes early, apparently.

She sat at the back of the room; the old floors and possibly even older chair creaking beneath her. There were only a handful of other people milling around the room, greeting each other with the easy familiarity she hadn't found since she was a kid. She'd missed it. The sense of belonging, of home. She hadn't realized she'd missed it. In fact, she'd run from the little town where she'd grown up as soon as she graduated high school, so ready to be free of its constraining borders. But somewhere along the way, the thrill of the city, the crowds, and the concrete had lost its allure.

She shifted in her seat and the chair groaned ominously. An older gentleman offered her a friendly smile and a salute as he walked by to join a group gathered near the podium. Jeanie raised a hand to return it, but he was already gone. Tucking her hands between her thighs in an effort to warm them and to keep from fidgeting, she watched the group greet the man with good-natured teasing about his bright-green tie. Jeanie couldn't remember the last time she'd joked around like that. The last time she had people like that to joke with. At least not in person. Somehow in the last several years, her closest friend had become her brother. And their relationship consisted of random texts, memes, and the occasional FaceTime chat.

Jeanie pulled her coat around her shoulders. It was freezing in here despite the rattling efforts of the radiators lining the walls.

The town meetings were held in the original town hall building, which according to the engraved brick out front was built in 1870. Jeanie couldn't really imagine what it looked like in 1870, but tonight it looked like a small auditorium with several rows of metal folding chairs and a podium up front. The stage behind the podium was decorated for what Jeanie imagined would

be an upcoming fall performance. Hand-painted scenery with pumpkins and apple trees lined the back of the stage with hay bales scattered in front. Jeanie pictured kids in costumes dancing around up there, waving to their parents in the audience. It would be adorable, she was sure. Although she did question the safety of putting children on a stage that old. Would those old wooden planks support them?

She shook the thought from her head and glanced back toward the double doors that led to the meeting space. Still no Logan. Maybe he'd just agreed to come to get her to stop talking. It wouldn't be the first time someone had agreed with her just to get her to shut up. She'd come on too strong, as per usual. Laying out all her problems and sleep-deprived theories right at the quiet farmer's feet. The very handsome, very quiet farmer.

Jeanie smoothed her hands down her thighs, trying to wrestle her bouncing knee into submission. It didn't matter that Logan was handsome. Like, very, very handsome. Like, if there was a *Sexy Farmer Weekly*, he would be on the cover.

It didn't matter because getting involved with handsome farmers was not a part of her New Jeanie plan. She had agreed to her aunt's crazy idea to take over the café so she could have a fresh start.

Jeanie had spent the last seven years as the executive assistant to the CEO of Franklin, Mercer & Young Financial. Until he had a heart attack and died at his desk one night. Jeanie had been the one to find him the next morning, his vacant eyes staring at her as she entered his office, coffee in hand. The coffee stain on the carpet from where she'd dropped the mug in shock was still there when she quit.

The doctor said the heart attack was stress-induced. That and Marvin's atrocious diet of mostly bacon and late-night takeout. But it was the stress-induced part that stuck with Jeanie. Was that her future? To work and work until her heart just gave out? Gave up?

Jeanie had a tendency to overthink. To over-talk. To overwork. She didn't do rest and relaxation very well. She didn't do calm or cool. But she was determined to try. For her health, she was determined to try. Suddenly, the fact that her life consisted only of work, a few office acquaintances she got drinks with on Fridays – when she wasn't too exhausted to join them – and her pitiful and sporadic attempts at dating, seemed like a very big problem. A deadly problem.

When, only a few weeks after Marvin's death, her Aunt Dot had devised this plan for Jeanie to move to Dream Harbor and take over the café, it had seemed like the perfect escape. Except now Jeanie was certain she was failing already. Especially after her little performance with the handsome farmer this morning. She'd nearly taken his head off, and then she'd talked his ear off at a thousand miles per hour. She'd seen the horrified look on his face. He'd wanted nothing more than to escape.

She glanced at the door again. Nothing but a small gaggle of older women bustling in. They smiled at her as they took their seats.

It was for the best, really. Jeanie also wasn't good at relationships that lasted longer than a

few weeks, and a fling in a town as small as this one seemed like a terrible idea. Not that Logan wanted to have a fling with her. Not that he'd even wanted to have a cup of coffee with her this morning, before she forced him into it . . .

'Hey.' His gruff greeting startled her out of her thoughts as he slid into the seat next to her. He smelled like the outdoors, like fall leaves and woodsmoke. Jeanie resisted the urge to snuggle closer to his warmth in the drafty room.

'Hi.' *Be cool, casual.* She stole a glance at him as he settled in. Still handsome. *Damn it.* 'How was your day?' she asked. Just a casual question for a new acquaintance. No crazy, ghost theories here.

'Uh . . . good.' He cleared his throat. 'Normal.'

Jeanie smiled. 'Normal is good.'

Logan nodded. 'If you like normal, you're going to hate this meeting.'

Jeanie smiled bigger. Was that a little joke from the serious farmer? 'Do things get wild at the Dream Harbor bi-monthly town meetings?'

'Just wait.' He'd leaned toward her and his low voice rumbled through her.

No time to dwell on that toe-curling sensation, though, because the meeting hall was filling in and Jeanie was busy taking in the sights.

People were starting to take their seats, the room warming significantly with the influx of bodies. A loud laugh drew Jeanie's attention to a few rows ahead of them. The owner of the laugh was a woman, maybe in her forties – though if she was, she looked great for her age further justifying Jeanie's small-town living plan. The people here aged so well! The woman laughed again, her sleek black bob brushing past her round face. She wedged herself in between an older woman with short, gray hair and a man in his twenties talking loudly, his hands punctuating every word.

'Book club,' Logan muttered in her ear.

'Book club,' Jeanie repeated faintly, watching as two other women, one with an infant strapped to her chest, joined the conversation from the next row. 'They look like fun.'

'Fun. Ha. They run this town.' Logan's ominous tone was completely at odds with the laughing, smiling group in front of them. Especially when the black-bobbed woman turned and gave him a big wave.

Logan groaned and waved back.

The rest of the group turned, and Jeanie could practically see their eyes light up, the whole group clearly pleased to see him.

'Logan! What a rare treat,' the older woman called.

'Hey, Nancy.'

'We miss you at our meetings,' the younger man said with a wink. A wink?

Logan grumbled. 'I never came to your meetings.'

The man laughed. 'Well, maybe not on purpose, but we liked roping you in. Especially when

we read *Passion in the Fields – The Farmer and the Milkmaid.*' The man was talking so loudly that the entire room could hear. Several people giggled and turned to look at Logan.

'Oh, that was such a good one.' The woman with the baby clapped a hand to her chest and mimed a swoon in her chair.

Logan's face, when Jeanie sneaked a peek, was bright red above his beard. She bit down on a smile.

'Are you the new café owner?' The black-haired woman asked her. 'I'm Kaori.'

'Jeanie. And, yes, I'm the new owner.'

'Get that place up and running again!' the lady with the baby scolded with a laugh. 'I'm tired of meeting at Kaori's house. It's too cluttered in there. Cutesy vases and weird knick-knacks everywhere. It gives me hives.'

Kaori playfully smacked the woman's shoulder. 'Ignore Isabel. And welcome to Dream Harbor.'

The book club ladies then returned to talking amongst themselves.

'*Passion in the Fields*, huh?' Jeanie asked, unable to resist.

Logan cleared his throat and shifted in his seat, the chair creaking loudly in protest. 'I didn't read it.'

'Too bad. Sounds like a good one.' She stifled a laugh at the thought of Logan reading a book about a farmer and a milkmaid, and forced herself to stop casting herself in the role of said 'milkmaid'.

'I guess I need to get things opened up again. I don't want to anger the book club.' She'd meant it as a joke but even she could hear the uncertainty in her voice, the stress of not being ready to open creeping in.

'Don't worry about them. They're just looking for a place to peddle their pornography.'

Jeanie looked up just in time to catch the small smile on his face. Another joke.

'Well, we wouldn't want that. And we certainly wouldn't want to objectify farmers.'

Logan's smile hitched higher. Oh, damn, she might need to go check this book out later. Satisfy her new appreciation for farmers in a safe way.

'Did I miss anything?' A woman with curly brown hair dropped into the seat on the other side of Logan.

'Nope.'

'Actually, you missed a pretty interesting literary conversation,' Jeanie chimed in, reminding Logan of her presence.

'It was not interesting. Jeanie, this is Hazel. Hazel, Jeanie.'

Hazel extended her hand across Logan's lap and Jeanie took it. Hazel's fingers stuck out of her fingerless mittens, and they were cold in Jeanie's hand.

'Nice to meet you.'

Hazel's gaze flicked from Jeanie to Logan and back again. 'Nice to meet you, too. I run the

bookstore next to your café.'

Jeanie's smile grew. 'Oh, it's so cute!'

Hazel's cheeks colored. 'Thanks.'

Jeanie was busy wondering if Hazel kept any farmer romances stocked and nearly missed the woman's next question.

'And how do you two know each other?' she asked.

'Oh, the usual way,' Jeanie said. 'I nearly knocked his head off with a baseball bat because I thought he was an intruder on his way to murder me, but he was actually just dropping off adorable little pumpkins . . . er . . . gourds. And then I mentioned the café might be haunted so he suggested I come here for some . . . uh . . . help.'

Hazel's eyes widened behind her glasses. 'Uh . . . wow.'

Jeanie tried for a smile that made her seem slightly less unhinged, but she didn't think it landed. Hazel sat back in her seat with a small smile of her own. She whispered something to Logan, which made Logan give a fierce shake of his head. Jeanie didn't have time to overthink that before another woman landed in a chair in the row ahead of them.

'Do you see him over there? He's clearly plotting something,' she said, launching straight into a conversation Jeanie didn't know they were having.

'He looks like he's just talking,' mumbled Logan, and the new woman narrowed her eyes at him.

'Yeah, talking to the mayor. He's probably got more crazy plans to ruin this town.'

'It's just a trivia night, Annie.'

'A trivia night on the same night as my Baking for Beginners class! He planned it like that!' She glowered at the man across the room and Jeanie followed her gaze. The trivia-planning, town-ruining man in question was tall and handsome. Not like farmer handsome, but definitely attractive. Dark hair, bronze skin. His smile was more of a cocky smirk. What was in the water here? Were all the town's men sexy? Was that the dream of Dream Harbor? Jeanie couldn't say she was mad about it.

'You act as though we haven't known Mac since kindergarten,' said Logan.

Annie frowned. 'That's exactly the problem. You remember how mean he was. He stole your chocolate milk every day of second grade! You of all people should understand!'

Logan let out a low laugh, a soft puff of air. 'I'm over it.'

Annie crossed her arms over her chest. 'Well, I'm not.'

She finally glanced in Jeanie's direction, who smiled and gave a small wave.

'Oh, my gosh! You must be the mysterious new café owner! I'm Annie, owner of The Sugar Plum Bakery. Nice to finally meet you.'

'Am I mysterious?' Jeanie asked, sneaking a glance at Logan. His face was grim, but he didn't offer up an answer. 'Nice to meet you, too. Your bakery smells delicious every morning.'

'Then, come by! Oh, and also, I usually deliver scones to the café on weekend mornings.'